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Letters to the Editor

Lafayette Measure B

Editor:

Unless you live under a rock, California's budget woes shouldn't be news. And each year, the woes get more woeful. The upcoming school year is about to take huge hit and many school programs will suffer, especially music. The future isn't any more promising. All the years of hard work, investment and creativity will chip away to nothing. Music is where my older son found his place starting in elementary and now into middle school, the toughest years. Band is his second home.

My youngest son says, "You just gotta have something fun like music at school." Parents say, "No musical performances? Isn't that a right of passage for the kids and the parents?" And pediatricians will tell you the arts are food for the brain. It's like the third leg of a three-legged stool, keeping our kids balanced. We will all feel the pain of the next round of cuts. We will feel them well beyond next year and the next. Music will be a foregone opportunity, a part of child development we can't get back.

My family feels fortunate to live in a community that shares such a heartfelt commitment to its people and its schools. Thank you Lafayette for having the foresight and strength to support educational funding, something our legislators seem to lack. Please continue to reach out to our youngest Lafayette citizens. Show them your support and vote yes for Measure B.

Francie Low

Lafayette

Editor:

I am the current Lafayette Elementary School PTA president and the father of two in the Lafayette School District. I have had the opportunity to work with our wonderful Superintendent Dr. Fred Brill and the Lafayette School District Board members and to examine the District's financial status going forward in the upcoming years.

To those who refuse to support Measure B, you are failing future generations of kids.

That's right; you are failing to provide for the kids. You object to paying \$14.66 per month (\$176 per year) to support the schools while the State of California provides the 48th lowest per capita funding in the United States for our students. You're okay with that?

You are okay with California being third in the nation in per capita funding for prisons and police/fire services but 48th in education?

Our kids deserve better.

California used to provide the best public education in the nation. Education used to be the Number 1 priority in California.

Our kids deserve to be put first.

Very truly yours,

Quinlan S. Tom

Lafayette

Editor:

Lafayette means a great deal to our family. As owner of Diablo Foods, I not only reside here but I base my livelihood on the health of this wonderful community and its residents. We take great pride in the historic link our store site has to the early "Apple Valley Days" that third graders study each year. Our family and staff care deeply about things that concern Lafayette.

Without a doubt, the state budget crisis is threatening our schools. In order to comply with proposed cuts, the district-and Lafayette's children--must face the reduction or complete elimination of cherished programs and attributes that have made Lafayette schools a model of exemplary public education. Our schools are renowned for teacher commitment, parent involvement, and community support. Now, with the dwindling financial support of the state, emergency actions such as Measure B can help fill in where the state has failed, and keep music, science, small classes and quality teachers in our Lafayette schools. Please help preserve quality schools in our city by passing the temporary parcel tax that is specifically earmarked for local school programs. Great schools should remain in Lafayette's present and future, not in our past.

Respectfully,

Ed Stokes

Lafayette

Editor:

I would like to voice support for Measure B, especially as it pertains to maintaining the programs in math/science and art/music at the elementary school level. My son is a first-grader at Burton Valley Elementary and is thoroughly enjoying his weekly time in these programs. He comes home with impressive bits of science information and art projects as a result. He has, like many kids his age, a remarkable capacity to explore his logical and creative sides.

As a veterinarian, conservationist and scientist, I believe that exposure at an early age to the above disciplines is crucial to creating interest, talent and life-experiences. This is often the foundation for youngsters to develop life-long desire and participate in these fields as adults.

The quality of education provided by the Lafayette School District, supplemented by co-organizations of PTA, LPIE and parent volunteerism, is a primary reason I chose to reside in Lafayette, ideally through my son's high school years. Activities such as the Science Fair and Holiday Sing provide an important community spirit that bonds us together. I firmly believe that it takes a village to raise productive and creative young citizens.

Measure B is a limited-time parcel tax designed to preserve these programs at the minimal cost of \$14.67 per month. The programs in math/science/technology and music/arts are a necessary part of our children's education and should not be viewed as "additional" or "extra". I implore the citizens of Lafayette to provide the options of these programs by supporting Measure B.

Sincerely,
Mona Miller Johnson

Editor:

Why is Measure B necessary? School funding from the State is inadequate. In 2008-2009, California spent \$2,300 less per student than the national average of \$11,223, which put our state in the bottom ten in the nation (edweek.org). Since then it's gotten worse, we've fallen to 47th in the nation. It is important to note, due to a model established in the 1970s, the Lafayette School District receives LESS than the California State average per pupil. Even with the financial support of the community, the Lafayette School District (LSD) spends less than \$9,000 per student. Top states spend almost twice that amount.

In the past three years, LSD funding from the State has decreased by \$1,089 per student. Due to this decrease in funding, the LSD has cut \$2.0M and as part of its 3 year required budget process, has approved cutting an additional \$2.0M. The 18% decrease in funding from the state compromises the quality of education in Lafayette.

Measure B does not solve the bigger problem of the State budget crisis. It will not bring back all of the cuts that the Lafayette schools have experienced but it will provide local temporary funding for education in Lafayette that cannot be taken by the State.

Looking to the future, the LSD prepares its students for the variety of rigorous courses offered at Acalanes and Campolindo High Schools. Lafayette students are preparing to live and compete in a global society.

Please vote YES on B - help preserve education in Lafayette.

Sincerely,
Corrine Christensen and
Juleen Lapporte
Lafayette

Editor:

As long-time residents and concerned citizens, we are worried for Lafayette's children. The economic uncertainty emanating from Sacramento has placed the educational future of children in great jeopardy.

Currently, millions of dollars have been cut from promised funding of the Lafayette School District by the State of California.

By voting YES on Measure B we gain more control locally and help to restore a portion of critical funding taken away by the State.

The Lafayette School District provides our children with one of the best public educations in California.

Measure B will allow Lafayette children the opportunity to continue receiving a top-flight education. A YES vote on Measure B is the only good answer given the current economic challenges the State has imposed on school funding.

All children count on us to provide the promise of a great education.

Karen and Tom Mulvaney
Lafayette

Editor:

There is nothing more reflective of a community's social fabric than its level of commitment to education. Seldom is a city viewed as a desirable life destination without a vibrant public education system as a valued resource. Dynamic communities and high-performing school systems are truly inter-dependent social institutions.

During my seven years with the Acalanes Union High School District, I have been blessed to work with a community that cares about public education. The exemplary dedication of the Lafayette School District's educational community has greatly enhanced the ability of AUHSD to assist our students in attaining their post-secondary education goals. The academic, co-curricular, and societal achievements routinely demonstrated by graduates of the schools of Lafayette are truly a combined effort of two districts dedicated to the life-long success of students.

Due to the political stalemate in California, many communities such as Lafayette must now decide whether they wish to have the career paths of students left to compromised funding agreements based on mediocrity as the norm.

Without a doubt, these are troubling financial times. It is at times like these that communities really demonstrate what they value most.

There is never a great time to ask people to contribute more of their personal income to any cause. However, an investment via Measure B will continue the success story of the Lafayette School District and help maintain the character of Lafayette. Now is not the time to rely upon judgments in Sacramento to direct the paths of our students.

John Stockton
AUHSD

Editor:

I have been a member of the Lafayette Elementary School District Governing Board since 1995. Throughout the Measure B campaign I have heard people say "not another tax". While I understand this response, I can honestly say that in all my sixteen years on the governing board I have never seen a worse fiscal situation for the school district. Due to state cuts to our district budget, we have cut administration

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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